

A Discourse
addressed to Magistrates and
Men in Authority

Occasioned by the Enormous Licence
and Irreligion of the Times

Gallio cared for none of those things.
Acts, xviii.17

First printed in 1738

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THIS was first published in 1738—in Dublin in March and in London in June (announced respectively in *Dublin Journal* of 21 March, and in *Gentleman's Magazine* for June). In the same year there was a Cork edition, and a 'second' London edition. These four issues have the same text. Also in 1738 there was a 'second' Dublin edition, with a revised text. All these were anonymous. Finally, the *Discourse* was included by Berkeley in his *Miscellany* (1752; London, also Dublin), where it is wrongly described as 'first printed in A.D. MDCCXXXVI.' I have followed the Dublin edition of this, preserving the paragraphing: for the indication of variants, the four earliest issues are symbolized by *A*, the second Dublin edition by *B*, and the London edition of the *Miscellany* by *C*. The only known contemporary response in writing to Berkeley's address is *A Letter to the . . . Bishop of Cloyne. By a Gentleman in the Army* (1739), preserved in the *Harleian Miscellany*, 1745 (VOL. III, pp. 169–77; 1809 edn., III, 177 ff).

Berkeley's biographer, Joseph Stock, says that the *Discourse* was 'occasioned by an impious society, called Blasters, which this pamphlet put a stop to. He expressed his sentiments on the same occasion in the House of Lords, the only time he ever spoke there.'¹ He had gone from Cloyne to Dublin in the autumn of 1737 to take his seat, and was there until the session ended in the following March. In February the Lords' Committees on Religion were instructed to consider, with the assistance of the Judges, 'the causes of the present notorious immorality and profaneness.' In March the Committees presented their report.² This mentions that a society, called the Blasters, had lately been formed for the cultivation of blasphemy and the honouring of the Devil,³ and expresses concern at an unparalleled decline of religion and law-abidingness. Whether Berkeley had initiated the discussion in the Irish Lords (as Stock seems to suggest) or the discussion

¹ *Memoirs of Berkeley*, 1776 (p. 31n of 1784 edn.). ² Reproduced at the end of this Introduction. It was included as an appendix in the second London edition of the *Discourse*, from which I take it. Fraser reprinted it in his *Life and Letters of Berkeley* (1871, p. 254). ³ Despite its notoriety, little seems to have been known about it. Lecky (*History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*,

evoked his *Discourse* is not known, but the similarity of the subject and the coincidence in time have to be noted. It is at least a fair inference that he wrote the *Discourse* in Dublin in February.

The composition is yet another of his criticisms of the free-thinkers, and a brief exposition of the moral conditions of society and of the religious conditions of morality. Society is impossible without order (cp. *Passive Obedience*), which is maintained outwardly by civil authority, and inwardly by the sense of public interest and by the common virtues. These inner moral attitudes are of themselves weak, needing for their maintenance and strengthening the outlook and motives of religion. Therefore anything that subverts religion carries with it the subversion of morality and the loosening—eventually the disintegration—of the social bond (cp. note on p. 69). For this reason religion, although it has its own divine sanctions, is properly given legal sanctions as well. The enforcement of the laws against impiety is thus a necessary part of the magistrate's duty. But this is not enough: he must also give to the nation's religion, to the Church as by law established and to its ministers, his personal support in conversation and conduct, among other things openly opposing the propaganda of the free-thinkers. These can plead no genuine grievance, for the freedom of thinking which they demand they are already fully allowed, and the freedom publicly to undermine morality, ridicule religion, and belittle civil authority they cannot fairly demand. As for their contention that moral and religious notions, being inculcated when we are young, are simply false prejudices, the plain reply is that prejudices as such are neither true nor false, and that most men are obliged, through lack of time, training or gift, to take the rules of right living and the superintendence of public affairs on trust. Although the magistrate is directly concerned with the outer behaviour of citizens, he cannot be indifferent to the notions that are recommended to them, since opinions govern conduct.

Berkeley himself indicates the divisions of the *Discourse*—(1) the beliefs and attitudes that are required for the sustentation of a politically organized society; (2) the witness of acknowledged thinkers to the need for the public care of a nation's religion;

ch. 2; 1892 edn., VOL. I, p. 323) assumes that it was the same as the Hell-fire Club that met near Dublin. There was a Hell-fire Club in Edinburgh at the beginning of the century (H. G. Graham, *Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, 1901, p. 93), and one in the middle of the century at Medmenham in Buckinghamshire (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edn., VOL. IV, p. 730^b).

and (3) the anarchic tendency of the ideas and practices of the so-called free-thinkers. Of special interest are his practical principle that rulers cannot make a fine nation out of poor human material (p. 210; cp. p. 122, qu. 204), his lucid account of the psychological necessity and moral desirability of some *praejudicia* (pp. 203-5), and his judgment that the general good of humanity is the criterion of moral truth (p. 211).

REPORT TO THE IRISH HOUSE OF LORDS

A report from the Lords' Committees for Religion, appointed to examine into the causes of the present notorious immorality and profaneness: made by the Earl of Granard on Friday the 10th of March, 1737.

My Lords,

The Lords' Committees for Religion, appointed to examine into the causes of the present notorious immorality and profaneness, beg leave, before they report to your Lordships what progress they have made in that inquiry, to observe that an uncommon scene of impiety and blasphemy appeared before them, wherein several persons must have been concerned; but by reason of their meeting late in the session they have not been able to prepare a full and satisfactory account thereof for your Lordships. However, they think it their duty to lay it before your Lordships, as it hath appeared to them that before the conclusion of this session some measures may be taken to put a stop to the spreading of these impieties, which it is to be hoped in the next session of Parliament your Lordships will be able by proper laws and remedies wholly to extinguish and prevent for the future.

The Lords' Committees have sufficient grounds to believe (though no direct proof thereof upon oath hath yet been laid before them) that several loose and disorderly persons have of late erected themselves into a society or club under the name of Blasters, and have used means to draw into this impious society several of the youth of this kingdom.

What the practices of this society are (besides the general fame spread through the whole kingdom) appears by the examinations of several persons, taken upon oath before the Lord Mayor of this city, in relation to Peter Lens, painter, lately come into this kingdom, who professes himself a Blaster.

By these examinations it appears that the said Peter Lens professes himself to be a votary of the Devil; that he hath offered up prayers to him, and publicly drank to the Devil's health; that he hath at several times uttered the most daring and execrable blasphemies against the sacred Name and Majesty of God; and often made use of such obscene, blasphemous and before unheard-of expressions as the Lords' Committees think they cannot even mention to your Lordships, and therefore choose to pass over in silence.

As impieties and blasphemies of this kind were utterly unknown to our ancestors, the Lords' Committees observe that the laws framed by them must be unequal to such enormous crimes, and that a new law is wanting, more effectually to restrain and punish blasphemies of this kind.

The Lords' Committees cannot take upon them to assign the immediate causes of such monstrous impieties; but they beg leave to observe that of late years there hath appeared a greater neglect of religion and all things sacred than was ever before known in this kingdom—a great neglect of divine worship both public and private, and of the due observance of the Lord's Day; a want of reverence to the laws and magistrates, and of a due subordination in the several ranks and degrees in the community, and an abuse of liberty under our mild and happy constitution; a great neglect in education, and a want of care in parents and masters of families in training up their children in reverence and awe, and keeping their servants in discipline and good order and instructing them in moral and religious duties; a great increase of idleness, luxury and excessive gaming, and an excess in the use of spirituous and intoxicating liquors.

Wherefore the Lords' Committees are come to the following resolutions, viz.:

Resolved, that it is the opinion of this Committee that His Majesty's Attorney-General be ordered to prosecute Peter Lens with the utmost severity of the law.

Resolved, that it is the opinion of this Committee that an humble address be presented to his Grace the Lord-Lieutenant that he would be pleased to order that a proclamation may issue with a reward for apprehending the said Peter Lens; and that he would be further pleased to give it in direction to the Judges in their several circuits to charge the magistrates to put the laws in execution against immorality and profane cursing and swearing and gaming, and to inquire into atheistical and blasphemous clubs.

Resolved, that it is the opinion of this Committee that the Bishops be desired at their Visitations to give it in particular charge to their clergy to exhort their people to a more frequent and constant attendance on divine service.

Resolved, that it is the opinion of this Committee that the Visitors of the University and of all schools do exhort and require the Fellows and Masters carefully to instruct the youth committed to their care in the principles of religion and morality, and to inculcate a due reverence to the laws and religion of their country.

To which report and resolutions, the question being severally put, the House did agree.

EN. STERN, *Cler. Parliamentor.*

A DISCOURSE ADDRESSED TO MAGISTRATES AND MEN IN AUTHORITY

THE pretensions and discourse of men throughout these kingdoms would, at first view, lead one to think the inhabitants were all politicians; and yet, perhaps, political wisdom hath in no age or country been more talked of and less understood. Licence is taken for the end of government, and popular humour for its origin. No reverence for the laws, no attachment to the constitution, little attention to matters of consequence, and great altercation upon trifles, such idle projects about religion and government as if the public had both to choose, a general contempt of all authority, divine and human, an indifference about 10 the prevailing opinions, whether they tend to produce order or disorder, to promote the empire of God or the devil—these are the symptoms that strongly mark the present age; and this could never have been the case if a neglect of religion had not made way for it.

When the Jews accused Paul upon religious matters and points of their law before Gallio, the Roman magistrate, it is said that Gallio ‘cared for none of those things.’ And it is to be feared there are not a few magistrates in this Christian country who think with the same indifference on the subject of religion. 20 Herein, nevertheless, they judge amiss, and are much wanting to their duty. For, although it be admitted that the magistrate’s peculiar object is the temporal welfare of the State; yet this will by no means exclude a proper care about the prevailing notions and opinions of religion, which influence the lives and actions of men, and have therefore a mighty effect on the public. Men’s behaviour is the consequence of their principles. Hence it follows that, in order to make a State thrive and flourish, care must be taken that good principles be propagated in the minds of those who compose it. 30

It would be vain to depend on the outward form, the constitution and structure, of a State, while the majority are ever
l 6 laws—(C) law.

governed by their inward ways of thinking, which at times will break out and shew themselves paramount to all laws and institutions whatsoever. It must be great folly therefore to overlook notions, as matters of small moment to the State; while experience shews there is nothing more important, and that a prevailing disorder in the principles and opinions of its members is ever dangerous to society, and capable of producing the greatest public evils.

Man is an animal formidable both from his passions and his
 10 reason; his passions often urging him to great evils, and his reason furnishing means to achieve them. To tame this animal, and make him amenable to order, to inure him to a sense of justice and virtue, to withhold him from ill courses by fear, and encourage him in his duty by hopes; in short, to fashion and model him for society, hath been the aim of civil and religious institutions, and in all times the endeavour of good and wise men. The aptest method for attaining this end hath been always judged a proper education.

If men's actions are an effect of their principles, that is, of
 20 their notions, their belief, their persuasions, it must be admitted that principles early sown in the mind are the seeds which produce fruit and harvest in the ripe state of manhood. How lightly soever some men may speak of notions, yet, so long as the soul governs the body, men's notions must influence their actions, more or less, as they are stronger or weaker, and to good or evil, as they are better or worse.

Our notions and opinions are a constant check on our appetites, and balance to our passions: and although they may not in every instance control and rule, yet they will never fail strongly
 30 to affect both the one and the other. What is it that bridles the impetuous desires of men? that restrains them when they are driven by the most violent passions? In a word, what is it that renders this world habitable, but the prevailing notions of order, virtue, duty, and Providence? Some, perhaps, may imagine that the eye of the magistrate alone is sufficient to keep mankind in awe. But if every man's heart was set to do all the mischief his appetite should prompt him to as often as opportunity and secrecy presented themselves, there could be no living in the world.

And although too many of those entrusted with civil power,
 40 in these our days, may be said with Gallio to 'care for none of those things;' and many more, who would pass for men of

l 12 to a—(A) with a. l 34 and Providence (not in A).

judgment and knowledge, may look on notions early imbibed, before their grounds and reasons are apprehended or understood, to be but mere prejudices; yet this will detract nothing from their truth and usefulness. To place this matter in a due light, I propose to shew that a system of salutary notions is absolutely necessary to the support of every civil constitution. I shall enforce this point by the testimony of those who are esteemed the wisest men; and I shall make some remarks on the modern prevailing spirit, and the tendency of the maxims of our times.

10

Order is necessary, not only to the well-being, but to the very being of a State. Now, order and regularity in the actions of men is not an effect of appetite or passion, but of judgment; and the judgment is governed by notions or opinions. There must, therefore, of necessity, in every State, be a certain system of salutary notions, a prevailing set of opinions, acquired either by private reason and reflection, or taught and instilled by the general reason of the public, that is, by the law of the land. True it is that where men either cannot or will not use their own reason, think and examine for themselves; in such case the notions 20 taught or instilled into their minds are embraced rather by the memory than the judgment. Nor will it be any objection to say that these are prejudices; inasmuch as they are therefore neither less useful nor less true, although their proofs may not be understood by all men.¹

Licentious habits of youth give a cast or turn to age; the young rake makes an old infidel; libertine practices beget libertine opinions; and a vicious life generally ends in an old age of prejudice not to be conquered by reasoning. Of this we see instances even in persons celebrated for parts, and who reason 30 admirably on other points where they are not biased; but on the subject of religion obtrude their guesses, surmises, and broken hints for arguments. Against such there is no reasoning.

Prejudices are notions or opinions which the mind entertains without knowing the grounds and reasons of them, and which are assented to without examination. The first notions which take possession of the minds of men, with regard to duties social,

l 15 *every State*—(A) *a well-ordered State*. *l* 24 *less . . . less*—(C) *the less . . . the less*. *l* 26 (*This paragraph not in A, B, C*).

¹ [That notions imbibed in childhood and ignorance are 'mere' prejudices was one of the common charges made by the free-thinkers against religion. Cp. *Alciphron*, II, 11.—Ed.]

moral, and civil, may therefore be justly styled prejudices. The mind of a young creature cannot remain empty; if you do not put into it that which is good, it will be sure to receive that which is bad.

Do what you can, there will still be a bias from education; and if so, is it not better this bias should lie towards things laudable and useful to society? This bias still operates, although it may not always prevail. The notions first instilled have the earliest influence, take the deepest root, and generally are found to give
 10 a colour and complexion to the subsequent lives of men, inas-
 much as they are in truth the great source of human actions. It is not gold, or honour, or power that move men to act, but the opinions they entertain of those things. Hence it follows that if a magistrate should say, 'No matter what notions men embrace, I will take heed to their actions;' therein he shews his weakness, for, such as are men's notions, such will be their deeds.

For a man to do as he would be done by; to love his neighbour as himself; to honour his superiors; to believe that God scans all his actions, and will reward or punish them; and to
 20 think that he who is guilty of falsehood or injustice hurts himself more than anyone else; are not these such notions and principles as every wise governor or legislator would covet above all things to have firmly rooted in the mind of every individual under his care? This is allowed, even by the enemies of religion, who would fain have it thought the offspring of State-policy,¹ honour-
 ing its usefulness at the same time that they disparage its truth. What, therefore, cannot be acquired by every man's reasoning must be introduced by precept, and riveted by custom; that is to say, the bulk of mankind must, in all civilized societies, have
 30 their minds, by timely instruction, well seasoned and furnished with proper notions, which, although the grounds or proofs thereof be unknown to them, will nevertheless influence their conduct and so far render them useful members of the State. But if you strip men of these their notions, or, if you will, prejudices, with regard to modesty, decency, justice, charity, and the like, you will soon find them so many monsters, utterly unfit for human society.

I desire it may be considered that most men want leisure, opportunity, or faculties to derive conclusions from their prin-
 40 ciples, and establish morality on a foundation of human science.

l 14 say—(A) say or think.

¹ [See *Alciphron*, I, 7 and note there (VOL. III, p. 42).—Ed.]

True it is (as St. Paul observes) that ' the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen ' (Romans, i.20). And from thence the duties of natural religion may be discovered. But these things are seen and discovered by those alone who open their eyes and look narrowly for them. Now, if you look throughout the world, you shall find but few of these narrow inspectors and inquirers, very few who make it their business to analyse opinions and pursue them to their rational source, to examine whence truths spring, and how they are inferred. In short, you shall find all men full of opinions, but knowledge only in a few. 10

It is impossible, from the nature and circumstances of human kind, that the multitude should be philosophers, or that they should know things in their causes. We see every day that the rules or conclusions alone are sufficient for the shopkeeper to state his account, the sailor to navigate his ship, or the carpenter to measure his timber; none of which understand the theory, that is to say, the grounds and reasons either of arithmetic or geometry. Even so in moral, political, and religious matters, it is manifest that the rules and opinions early imbibed at the first dawn of understanding, and without the least glimpse of 20 science, may yet produce excellent effects, and be very useful to the world; and that in fact they are so will be very visible to everyone who shall observe what passeth round about him.

It may not be amiss to inculcate that the difference between prejudices and other opinions doth not consist in this, that the former are false, and the latter true; but in this, that the former are taken upon trust, and the latter acquired by reasoning. He who hath been taught to believe the immortality of the soul may be as right in his notion as he who hath reasoned himself into that opinion. It will, then, by no means follow that because 30 this or that notion is a prejudice, it must be therefore false. The not distinguishing between prejudices and errors is a prevailing oversight among our modern free-thinkers.

There may be, indeed, certain mere prejudices or opinions, which, having no reasons either assigned or assignable to support them, are nevertheless entertained by the mind, because they intruded betimes into it. Such may be supposed false, not because they were early learned, or learned without their reasons, but because there are in truth no reasons to be given for them.

Certainly, if a notion may be concluded false because it was 40 early imbibed, or because it is with most men an object of belief rather than of knowledge, one may by the same reasoning

conclude several propositions of Euclid to be false. A simple apprehension of conclusions as taken in themselves, without the deductions of science, is what falls to the share of mankind in general. Religious awe, the precepts of parents and masters, the wisdom of legislators, and the accumulated experience of ages supply the place of proofs and reasonings with the vulgar of all ranks: I would say that discipline, national constitution, and laws human or divine are so many plain landmarks, which guide them into the paths wherein it is presumed they ought to
10 tread.

From what hath been premised, it plainly appears that in the bulk of mankind there are and must be prejudices, that is, opinions taken upon trust; or, in other words, that there are points of faith among all men whatsoever, as well as among Christians.

And as it is evident that the unthinking part of every age, sex, and condition among us, must necessarily receive notions with the submission of faith; so it is very reasonable that they should submit their faith to the greatest authorities human and
20 divine, the law and the gospel. But if once all reverence for these be destroyed, our pretenders to moral knowledge will have no authority to imbue the multitude with such notions as may control their appetites. From all which it follows that the modern schemes of our free-thinkers, who pretend to separate morality from religion, how rational soever they may seem to their admirers, are, in truth and effect, most irrational and pernicious to civil society.

Let anyone who thinks at all consider the savage state of undisciplined men, whose minds are nurtured to no doctrine,
30 broke by no instruction, governed by no principle. Let him at the same time reflect on a society of persons educated in the principles of our Church, formed betimes to fear God, to reverence their superiors, to be grateful to their benefactors, forgiving to their enemies, just and charitable to all men; and he will then be able to judge of the merits of those who are so active to weed out the prejudices of education.

Among the many wild notions broached in these giddy times, it must be owned that some of our declaimers against prejudice have wrought themselves into a sort of esteem for savages, as a
40 virtuous and unprejudiced people.¹ In proof of which, they allege

¹ Berkeley is protesting against a fashion. The idea of the *bon sauvage* ('noble savage' seems to have been first used in English by Dryden) was

their being free from many vices practised in civilized nations. Now, it is very true, among savages there are few instances to be found of luxury, avarice, or ambition; not that the contrary virtues take place, but because the opportunities and faculties for such vices are wanting. For the same reason, you do not see them in brutes.

What they esteem and admire in those creatures is not innocence, but ignorance; it is not virtue, but necessity. Give them but the means of transgressing, and they know no bounds. For example: supply the water-drinking savage with 10 strong liquor, and he shall be drunk for several days and nights together. Again: we admit an uneducated savage knows not how to supplant a rival with the refined treachery of a courtier; yet, if you put his foe once in his power, you shall soon see what a horrible relish and delight the monster hath in cruelty.

Above all others, religious notions, or, if you will, prejudices (since this, as hath been already observed, detracts nothing from their truth and usefulness), have the most influence; they are the strongest curb from vice, and the most effectual spur to 20 worthy conduct. And, indeed, whether we consider the reason of things, or the practice of men in all times, we shall be satisfied that nothing truly great and good can enter into the heart of one attached to no principles of religion, who believes no Providence, who neither fears hell, nor hopes for heaven.

Punishments and rewards have always had, and always will have, the greatest weight with men; and the most considerable of both kinds are proposed by religion, the duties whereof fall in with the views of the civil magistrate: it undeniably follows, that nothing can add more strength to a good and righteous govern- 30 ment than religion. Therefore it mainly concerns governors to keep an attentive eye on the religion of their subjects. And indeed it is one lesson to magistrate and people, prince and subject, 'Keep my commandments and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye' (Prov., vii.2).

l 2 Now—(A) To which I answer that. l 27 and—(A,? correctly) and as.

the fruit of travellers' tales and romances. The French *philosophes* were soon to give it their sanction; in particular, Rousseau contrasts the 'good savage' with the 'perverse' product of Western civilization (*Discours sur les sciences et les arts*, 1750; *Discours sur l'inégalité*, 1754). The idea, besides gaining currency in romantic literature, became in France one of the means of expressing criticism of the decadent régime.—Ed.]

Although it is no consequence, from what hath been said, that men should be debarred the free use of reason and inquiry, yet surely it will follow that, without good reason, a man should not reject those notions which have been instilled by the laws and education of his country. And even they who think they have such reason have nevertheless no right of dictating to others.¹ It is true, divine authority is superior to all human prejudices, institutions, and regards whatsoever. And it is wise, although at the risk of liberty or life, to obey God rather than man. But
 10 our modern reformers of prejudice have nothing to plead of that kind.²

There is no magistrate so ignorant as not to know that power—physical power—resides in the people: but authority is from opinion, which authority is necessary to restrain and direct the people's power, and therefore religion is the great stay and support of a State. Every religion that inculcates virtue and discourageth vice is so far of public benefit. The Christian religion doth not only this, but further makes every legal constitution sacred by commanding our submission thereto.³ 'Let
 20 every soul be subject to the higher powers (saith St. Paul), for the powers that be are ordained of God' (Rom., xiii.1). And in effect, for several years past, while the reverence for our Church and religion hath been decaying and wearing off from the minds of men, it may be observed that loyalty hath in proportion lost ground; and now the very word seems quite forgotten. Submission for conscience, as well as for wrath, was once reckoned a useful lesson; but now, with other good lessons, is laid aside as an obsolete prejudice.

That prince or magistrate, however great or powerful, who
 30 thinks his own authority sufficient to make him respected and obeyed, lies under a woeful mistake, and never fails to feel it sooner or later. Obedience to all civil power is rooted in the religious fear of God: it is propagated, preserved, and nourished by religion. This makes men obey, not with eye-service, but in sincerity of heart. Human regards may restrain men from open and penal offences; but the fear of God is a restraint from

l 7 *divine authority*—(A) *a commission from heaven.* l 18 *this*—(A) *do this.*

¹ Though a man's private judgment be a rule to himself, it will not thence follow that he hath anyright to set it up for a rule to others [Not in A.—Ed.].

² No man can say he is obliged in conscience, honour, or prudence, to insult the public wisdom, or to ridicule the laws under whose protection he lives [Not in A.—Ed.]. ³ [This point is pressed in *Passive Obedience*.—Ed.]

all degrees of all crimes, however circumstanced. Take away this stay and prop of duty, this root of civil authority; and all that was sustained by it or grew from it shall soon languish. The authority, the very being of the magistrate, will prove a poor and precarious thing.

An inward sense of the supreme majesty of the King of kings is the only thing that can beget and preserve a true respect for subordinate majesty in all the degrees of power, the first link of authority being fixed at the throne of God. But, in these our days, that *majestas imperii*, that sacredness of character, which rooted in a religious principle was the great guard and security of the State, is through want thereof become the public scorn. And indeed what hold can the prince or magistrate have on the conscience of those who have no conscience? How can he build on the principles of such as have no principles? Or how can he hope for respect where God Himself is neglected?

It is manifest that no prince upon earth can hope to govern well, or even to live easy and secure, much less respected by his people, if he do not contribute by his example and authority to keep up in their minds an awful sense of religion. As for a moral sense, and moral fitness, or eternal relations, how insufficient those things are for establishing general and just notions of morality, or for keeping men within due bounds, is so evident from fact and experience that I need not now enter into a particular disquisition about them.¹

It must be owned that the claws of rapine and violence may in some degree be pared and blunted by the outward polity of a State. But should we not rather try, if possible, to pull them quite out? The evil effects of wickedness may be often redressed by public justice. But would it not be better to heal the source, and, by an inward principle, extirpate wickedness from the heart, rather than depend altogether on human laws for preventing or redressing the bad effects thereof? 'I might (said the Chinese doctor, Confucius) hear and decide controversies as well as another: but what I would have is, that men should be brought to abstain from controversies out of an inward love and regard for each other.'²

l 3 was sustained by it or (not in A).

¹ See *Alciphron*, DIAL. III and IV. ² *Scientia Sinensis*, LIB. I, fol. 12. [*Confucius Sinarum philosophus, sive Scientia Sinensis*, 1687, Paris, folio.—Ed.]

Too many in this age of free remarks and projects are delighted with republican schemes;¹ and imagine they might remedy whatever was amiss, and render a people great and happy, merely by a new plan or form of government. This dangerous way of thinking and talking is grown familiar, through the foolish freedom of the times.² But, alas ! those men do not seem to have touched either the true cause or cure of public evils. Be the plan ever so excellent, or the architects ever so able, yet no man in his wits would undertake to build a palace with mere mud
 10 or dirt. There must be fit materials; and without a religious principle men can never be fit materials for any society, much less for a republic. Religion is the centre which unites, and the cement which connects, the several parts or members of the political body. Such it hath been held by all wise men, from the remotest times down to our ingenious contemporaries, who, if they are in the right, it must be admitted that all the rest of the world have been in the wrong.

From the knowledge of its being absolutely necessary to the government of a State that the hearts and minds of the people
 20 be inwardly imbued with good principles, Plato³ tells that 'Jupiter, to preserve the race of men from perishing, sent Mercury with orders to introduce modesty and justice among them, as the firmest ties of human society; and without which it could not subsist.' And elsewhere the same author⁴ gives it plainly as his sense that 'concerning those great duties which men's appetites and passions render difficult, it should seem rather the work of God to provide, than of human legislators, if it were possible to hope for a system of laws framed and promulgated by God Himself.' You see how agreeable the Mosaic and
 30 Christian institutions are to the wishes of the wisest heathen.

Moses, indeed, doth not insist on a future state, the common basis of all political institutions; nor do other lawgivers make a

l 10 dirt—(A) dirt of the streets. l 19 government—(A) good government.

¹[These sprang up during the preceding century, especially during the Commonwealth—e.g. the Levellers, the Diggers, Milton's *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and *Ready and Easy Way to establish a free Commonwealth*; also Algernon Sidney's *Discourses concerning Government* (1698). The free-thinker John Toland, against whom Berkeley had argued in *Alciphron*, had republished Harrington's *Oceana* (1656) in 1700. Such other republicanism as there was in Berkeley's day would have to be sought, so far as I know, in petty and forgotten pamphlets.—Ed.] ²Men forget that liberty consists in a mean, or that there is any other extreme beside tyranny [Not in A.—Ed.] ³In *Protagora* [322 c.—Ed.] ⁴*De legibus* [835 c.—Ed.]

particular mention of all things necessary, but suppose some things as generally known or believed. The belief of a future state (which it is manifest the Jews were possessed of long before the coming of Christ) seems to have obtained among the Hebrews from primeval tradition; which might render it unnecessary for Moses to insist on that article. But the Sadducees and Epicureans had, in progress of time, gone so far towards rooting out this ancient and original sentiment that it was in danger of being lost had it not been taught and promulgated in a new light by our blessed Saviour.

10

But many among us who would pass for assertors of truth and liberty are accustomed to rail at this, and all other established opinions, as prejudices which people are taught whether they will or no, and before they are able to distinguish whether they are right or wrong. These lovers of truth would do well to consider that, in political, moral, and religious matters, the opinions of the vulgar, whether they go in coaches, or walk on foot, are for the most part prejudices; and are so like to be whatever side of the question they embrace, whether they follow the old maxims of the religion of their country, or the modern 20 instructions of their new masters. I have already observed that a point's being useful, and inculcated betimes, can be no argument of its falsehood, even although it should be a prejudice; far otherwise, utility and truth are not to be divided; the general good of mankind being the rule or measure of moral truth.¹

I shall now add, that it is to be apprehended many of those who are the most forward to banish prejudices would be the first to feel the want of them. It is even pitiful to think what would become of certain moderate declaimers on that article were prejudice really set aside, and were all men to be weighed in the 30 exact scale of merit, and considered in proportion only to their intrinsic worth. Some prejudices are grounded in truth, reason, and nature. Such are the respects which are paid to knowledge, learning, age, honesty and courage, in all civilized countries. Others are purely the effect of particular constitutions; such are the respects, rights, and pre-eminences ascribed to some men by their fellow-subjects, on account of their birth and quality; which, in the great empires of Turkey and China, pass for nothing, and will pass for nothing elsewhere as soon as men have got rid

l 22 point's—(A) point. l 24 utility (C has "unity", clearly a misprint). l 35 such are—(A) such as.

¹ See *Alciphron*, DIAL. I, Sect. 16.

of their prejudices, and learned to despise the constitutions of their country. It may behove those who are concerned, to reflect on this betimes.

God, comprehending within Himself the beginning, end, and middle of all things and times, exerts His energy throughout the whole creation. He never ceaseth to influence by instinct, by the light of nature, by His declared will. And it is the duty of magistrates and lawgivers to cultivate and encourage those divine impressions in the minds of all men under their care. We are
 10 not to think it is the work of God, and therefore not to be seconded by human care. Far otherwise, for that very reason it claims our utmost care and diligence; it being the indispensable duty of all good men, throughout the whole course of their lives, to co-operate with the designs of Providence. In religion, as in nature, God doth somewhat, and somewhat is to be done on the part of man. He causes the earth to bring forth materials for food and raiment; but human industry must improve, prepare, and properly apply both the one and the other, or mankind may perish with cold and hunger. And, according to this same
 20 analogy,¹ the principles of piety and religion, the things that belong to our salvation, although originally and primarily the work of God, yet require the protection of human government, as well as the furtherance and aid of all wise and good men.

And if religion in all governments be necessary, yet it seems to be so more especially in monarchies: forasmuch as the frugal manners and more equal fortunes in republics do not so much inflame men's appetites, or afford such power or temptation to mischief, as the high estate and great wealth of nobles under a king. Therefore, although the magistrate (as was already ob-
 30 served) hath for his peculiar object the temporal wellbeing of the State, yet this will by no means exempt him from a due concern for the religion of his country.

What was the sense of our ancestors on this point appears throughout the whole constitution of these kingdoms; and, in order to justify this constitution, and the wisdom of those who framed it, I shall crave leave to make use of some unsuspected testimonies, ancient and modern, which will shew that the public care of a national religion hath been always a most principal

l 17 improve, prepare—(A) improve, cultivate, prepare.

¹ It will be sufficient if such analogy appears between the dispensations of grace and nature, as may make it probable to suppose them derived from the same Author.—*Alciphron*, DIAL. VI, Sect. 31.

point in the esteem of wise men, however run down by the prevailing licence of our times.

The first testimony I shall produce is that of Zaleucus, the famous lawgiver of the Locrians, who, in his preamble to his laws,¹ begins with religion, laying it down as the corner-stone or foundation of his whole superstructure, 'that every inhabitant subject of the State should be persuaded that there is a God and divine Providence: that the only way of becoming dear to God is by endeavouring above all things to be good, both in deed and in will: that a worthy citizen is one that prefers integrity to 10 wealth.' He further admonishes those who are difficult to persuade, 'to bethink themselves of God's providence, and the punishments that await evil-doers; and in all their actions to be ever mindful of the last day as if it were present; or in case the devil² should tempt a man to sin, he exhorts such a one to frequent the temples and altars, worshipping and imploring the divine assistance.'

Aristotle,³ discoursing of the means to preserve a monarchy, admonishes the supreme magistrate, above all things, to shew himself zealous in religious matters; and this particularly for 20 two reasons. '1. Because the subjects will have less to fear from one who fears God. 2. Because they will be less apt to rebel against him whom they take to be the favourite of heaven.' And elsewhere this same philosopher recommends the worship of the gods, as the first care of the State.⁴

Plato likewise begins his *Laws* with the care of religious rites. He even maintains religion or divine worship to be the chief aim and scope of human life.⁵

Hippodamus the Milesian,⁶ in his scheme of a republic, allotted a third part of the land for maintaining divine worship.⁷ 30

The Roman historians and poets do so abound with passages ascribing the successes of their government to religion, and its

l 4 *his*—(A, B) *the*. *l* 7 *subject*—(A) *or subject*.

¹ Stobaeus, *De leg. et consuet.*, Ser. 145. [In the *Sermones* (or *Florilegium*), XLIV, 20. The code of Zaleucus (660 B.C.) seems to have been the first Greek collection of laws. There is doubt about the genuineness of the preamble given in Stobaeus.—Ed.] ² Δαίμων κακός. ³ *De repub.* [BK. V, ch 11. (1314^b, 38).—Ed.] ⁴ *Ib.*, LIB. VII, cap. 17 [ch. 8 (1328^b, 12).—Ed.]

⁵ *De leg.*, LIB. IV et VI. ⁶ Arist., *De republ.*, LIB. II, cap. 8 [1267^b, 34.—Ed.]

⁷ The abolishing of the Christian religion upon a frugal principle must be bad policy, if we may judge what will be by what hath been in the great pagan States of antiquity; whose religions, upon a fair estimate, will be found to have been more expensive.

declension to the want or neglect thereof, that it may seem impertinent to enter into a detail of what every schoolboy knows.

To come from ancient to modern authority, Machiavel himself represents religion as absolutely necessary to maintain civil order and government. He observes that for many years there was a most awful sense of religion in the old Romans, and that this did much facilitate their great undertakings. He likewise observes, and shews by divers instances, that the Romans were more afraid to break an oath than to transgress the laws; 10 and that those things which even the love of their country and constitution could not bring them to, they were brought to through a sense of religion. Upon the whole he concludes that old Rome was more obliged to Numa, who established a national religion, than to Romulus himself, the founder of that State.¹

And here by the bye I shall take notice, that some may imagine the various forms and institutions of religion ought to unsettle men's minds with regard to the truth and certainty of any. But this matter rightly considered will, I think, produce a contrary effect. It sheweth, indeed, that men groping out their way by 20 the dim twilight of nature did only approach, some nearer, some farther off, while all were short of the truth. But then it sheweth likewise, upon the whole and in general, that religion is so natural to our minds, so useful to society, and of so necessary importance to the world, as might well prove its truth, and render it worthy of the divine care to propagate by prophecies, miracles, and the mission of the Son of God.

Philip de Comines,² a wise statesman and honest writer, who had great experience in affairs, declares it to be his opinion, 'that want of religious faith is the only fountain of all mischiefs.' 30 And that able minister, the famous Monsieur Colbert,³ makes it his observation, 'that if once the ecclesiastical character, as such, is vilified, the civil magistrate, even the Crown itself, will, in consequence thereof, lose all authority.'

It would be no hard matter to produce a cloud of testimonies in behalf of a national religion, from the most eminent of our own writers; but I shall content myself with adding one only, and that from a very unsuspected writer, Mr. Harrington, author of the *Oceana*, who shews that to be just and fair which others

l 21 while—(A) although. l 38 who shews . . . expedient (not in A).

¹ *Discorsi*, LIB. I, cap. 12. ² *Hist.*, BK. V. [c. 1445-1511. His *Mémoires* were first published 1524-5.—Ed.] ³ *Test. Pol.*, c. 8. [The *Testament Politique* of the Minister of Finance to Louis XIV.—Ed.]

have shewed to be expedient. 'A man (saith he) that, pleading for liberty of conscience, refuseth liberty to the national conscience, must be most absurd.'¹ And again: 'If the conviction of a man's private conscience produce his private religion, the conviction of the national conscience must produce a national religion.'²

All these authorities are taken from thinking men and able politicians, none of which can be supposed to say what he did not really think; and it had been very easy to have increased the number. But I am sorry I was obliged to mention any at all in proof of so plain and fundamental a point as that of a national religion. It is, indeed, a shameful necessity we lie under, of proving at this time of day the first elements, I will not say of Christianity, but even of natural light, from reasons and from authorities. The spirit of the times hath rendered this unavoidable.

If it should be asked after all, How comes it then to pass that the fashionable and prevailing maxims among our betters in a neighbouring nation should run directly counter to all such reasons and authorities? I will answer this question by asking, When were our neighbours known to abound to that degree in highwaymen, murderers, housebreakers, incendiaries? When did such numbers lay violent hands on themselves? When was there such a general and indecent contempt of whatever is esteemed sacred, in the State as well as the Church? When were there known among them such public frauds, such open confederacies in villainy, as the present age hath produced? When were they lower in the esteem of mankind, more divided at home, or more insulted abroad?

We of this land have a fatal tendency to overlook the good qualities, and imitate whatever is amiss in those whom we respect. This leads me to make some remarks on the modern spirit of reformation, that works so strongly in both these kingdoms.

Freedom of thought is the general plea and cry of the age; and we all grant that thinking is the way to know; and the more real knowledge there is in the land, the more likely it will be to thrive. We are not therefore against freedom of thought, but we are against those unthinking overbearing people,³ who,

l 18 counter—(A) contrary.

¹ P. 27, first edition. ² *Ibid.* ³ It is not reason candidly proposed that offends, but the reviling, insulting, ridiculing, of the national laws and religion; all this profiteth for free-thinking, and must needs be offensive to all reasonable men [Not in A.—Ed.]

in these odd times, under that pretence, set up for reformers, and new moulders of the constitution. We declare against those who would seduce ignorant and unexperienced persons from the reverence they owe to the laws and religion of their country; and, under the notion of extirpating prejudices, would erase from their minds all impressions of piety and virtue, in order to introduce prejudices of another kind, destructive of society.

We esteem it a horrible thing to laugh at the apprehensions of a future state, with the author of the *Characteristics*; ¹ or with
 10 him who wrote the *Fable of the Bees*,² to maintain that, ‘moral virtues are the political offspring which flattery begot upon pride’; ³ that ‘in morals there is no greater certainty than in fashions of dress’; ⁴ that, indeed, ‘the doctrine of good manners teacheth men to speak well of all virtues; but requires no more of them in any age or country than the outward appearance of those in fashion.’ ⁵ Two authors of infidel systems these, who, setting out upon opposite principles, are calculated to draw all mankind, by flattering either their vanity or their passions, into one or other system. And yet the people among whom such books are
 20 published wonder how it comes to pass that the civil magistrate daily loseth his authority, that the laws are trampled upon, and the subject in constant fear of being robbed, or murdered, or having his house burnt over his head.

It may be presumed that the science of finding fault, which above all others is easiest to learn, suits best with a modern education. Too many there are of better fortunes than understandings, who have made the inquiry after truth a very small part of their care; these see somewhat, but not enough. It were to be wished they knew either less or more. One thing it is
 30 evident they do not know; to wit, that while they rail at prejudice they are undoing themselves: they do not comprehend (what hath been before hinted) that their whole figure, their political existence, is owing to certain vulgar prejudices, in favour of birth, title, or fortune, which add nothing of real worth either to mind or body, and yet cause the most worthless person to be respected.

Freedom of thought is the prerogative of human kind; it is a quality inherent in the very nature of a thinking being. Nothing

¹ VOL. III, *Miscel.* 3, cap. 2. ² [Shaftesbury and Mandeville respectively. Berkeley had examined their views on morality in *Alciphron*, II and III.—Ed.]

³ *Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue*. Ed. 6, p. 37. ⁴ The author’s ‘Remarks’ on his *Fable of the Bees*, p. 379. ⁵ *Remarks*, PART II, p. 155.

is more evident than that every one can think his own way, in spite of any outward force or power whatsoever. It is therefore ridiculous for any man to declaim in defence of a privilege which cannot be denied or taken from him. But this will not infer a boundless freedom of speech,¹ an open contempt of laws, and a prescribing from private judgment² against public authority, things never borne in any well-ordered state, and which make the crying distemper of our times.

[The constitution of these kingdoms hath been one while overheated by the indiscreet zeal of one set of men: again it hath¹⁰ been cold and lifeless through the indifference of another.³ We have alternately felt the furious effects of superstition and fanaticism; and our present impending danger is from the setting up of private judgment, or an inward light, in opposition to human and divine laws. Such an inward conceited principle always at work and proceeding gradually and steadily, may be sufficient to dissolve any human fabric of polity or civil government. To pretend to be wiser than the laws hath never been suffered in any wise State, saith Aristotle.⁴ And indeed what wise State would encourage or endure a spirit of opposition⁵ publicly to operate²⁰ against its own decrees? Who can say to such a spirit, Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther?]

[The magistrate, perhaps, may not be sufficiently aware that those pretended advocates for private light and free thought are in reality seditious men, who set up themselves against national laws and constitutions. And yet, one would think all mankind might see that the spirit which prevails against the Church and religion proceeds from an opposition rather to the laws of the land than to the Gospel. Men quarrel not so vehemently against

l 4 cannot—(A) if he holds his tongue, cannot. l 6 prescribing from—(A, B) setting up of. l 9 (These two paragraphs not in Dublin edn. of Miscellany. I have let them remain, with the warning of brackets, for typographical convenience, as they have their own variants and footnotes). l 15 conceited—(A) selfish. l 24 pretended advocates—(A) earnest contenders.

¹ Is there no difference between indulging scrupulous consciences, and tolerating public deriders of all conscience and religion? [Not in A.—Ed.]

² A man who is himself permitted to follow his own private judgment cannot well complain, although he may not set it up as a public rule [Not in A.—Ed.] ³ There is a medium in things, which wise men find out, while the unwise are always blundering in extremes [Not in A.—Ed.] ⁴ *Rhet.*,

LIB. I, cap. 15 [1375^b, 23.—Ed.] ⁵ Reason modestly pleading from a conscientious principle hath nothing cruel to apprehend from our laws, and I hope it never will. At the same time, it must be allowed that every plea against law ought to be very meek and modest [Not in A.—Ed.]

articles of faith themselves, as against the establishing of such matters, which is the sole effect of law and the supreme power. It clearly follows, the freedom pleaded for is not so much freedom of thought against the doctrines of the Gospel as freedom of speech and action against the laws of the land. It is strange that those who are not blind in other matters should yet not see this; or, that seeing it, they should not discern the consequences thereof.]

I am sensible, that whatever looks like a restraint on freedom
 10 of inquiry must be very disagreeable to all reasoning and in-
 quisitive men. But against this I have said nothing.¹ On the
 contrary, I will freely own, a judicious and impartial search after
 truth is the most valuable employment of the mind. Those who
 have the talents, and will be at the pains, cannot do better than
 engage in that noble pursuit. But those who are not qualified
 by age or education, those who have neither disposition nor
 leisure nor faculties to dig in the mine of truth themselves, must
 take it as retailed out by others. I see no remedy. God, who
 knows the opportunities of every man, requires impossibilities
 20 from no man. And where there is a sincere love of truth and
 virtue, the grace of God can easily supply the defect of human
 means.

It hath been before observed, and shewed at large, that the
 bulk of mankind must have their minds betimes imbued with
 good and wholesome notions or principles, by their parents,
 pastors, and tutors, or else bad notions, hurtful to themselves
 and others, will undoubtedly take possession thereof. Such bad
 notions have, for several years past, been propagated with un-
 common industry in these kingdoms: they now bring forth fruit
 30 every day more and more abundant. It is to be feared that
 what hath been long ripening is now near ripe. Many are the
 signs and tokens. He that runs may read.

But there cannot be a higher or more flagrant symptom of
 the madness of our times than that execrable fraternity of
 blasphemers, lately set up within this city of Dublin. Blasphemy
 against God is a great crime against the State. But that a set of
 men should, in open contempt of the laws, make this very crime
 their profession, distinguish themselves by a peculiar name,² and
 form a distinct Society, whereof the proper and avowed business
 40 shall be to shock all serious Christians by the most impious and

¹ The profane and lawless scorner is one thing, and the modest inquirer
 after truth another [Not in *A.*—Ed.] ² Blasters [See Introduction.—Ed.]

horrid blasphemies, uttered in the most public manner: this surely must alarm all thinking men. It is a new thing under the sun reserved for our worthy times and country.

It is no common blasphemy I speak of; it is not simple cursing and swearing; it is not the effect either of habit or surprise; but a train of studied, deliberate indignities against the divine Majesty; and those of so black and hellish a kind as the tongues alone which uttered them can duly characterize and express. This is no speculative heresy, no remote or doubtful inference from an author's tenets. It is a direct and open ¹⁰ attack on God Himself. It is such a calm premeditated insult upon religion, law, and the very light of nature that there is no sect or nation of men, whether Christians, Jews, Mahometans, or even civilized heathens, that would not be struck with horror and amazement at the thought of it, and that would not animadvert ¹ on its authors with the utmost severity.

Deliberate, atheistical blasphemy is of all crimes most dangerous to the public, inasmuch as it opens the door to all other crimes, and virtually contains them all; a religious awe and fear of God being (as we have already observed) the centre that ²⁰ unites, and the cement that connects all human society. He who makes it his business to lessen or root out from the minds of men this principle doth in effect endeavour to fill his country with highwaymen, house-breakers, murderers, fraudulent dealers, perjured witnessess, and every other pest of society. Therefore, it would be the greatest cruelty to our children, neighbours, and country to connive at such a crime; a crime which hath no natural passion or temptation to plead for it, but is the pure effect of an abandoned impudence in wickedness, and, perhaps, of a mistaken hope that the laws and magistrates are ³⁰ asleep.

The question is not now, whether religion shall be established by law: the thing is already done (and done with good reason, as appeareth from the premises), but whether a reverence ² for the laws shall be preserved. Religion, considered as a system of saving truths, hath its sanction from heaven; its rewards and penalties are divine. But religion, as useful and necessary to

¹ They (if there be any such) who think to serve the Reformation by joining with Blasters and devil-worshippers in a plea for licence, are in truth a scandal and reproach to the Protestant cause [Not in A.—Ed.] ² They who plead a right to contradict the laws can pretend none for doing it with insolence or disrespect [Not in A.—Ed.]

society, hath been wisely established by law; and so established, and wrought into the very frame and principles of our government, is become a main part of the civil constitution. Our laws are the laws of a Christian country: our government hath been constituted and modelled by Christians; and is still administered and maintained by men professing belief in Christ. Can it then be supposed that impious men shall with impunity invent¹ and publicly utter the most horrid blasphemies, and at the same time the whole constitution not be endangered? Or can it be supposed that magistrates, or men invested with power, should look on, and see the most sacred part of our constitution trampled under foot, and yet imagine their own dignity and authority to be secure, which rest entirely thereupon? I will venture to say that whoever is a wise man, and a lover of his country, will not only be solicitous to preserve the honour of God sacred and entire; he will even discourage that prevailing prejudice against the dispensers of God's word, the teachers of those salutary doctrines, without which the public cannot thrive or subsist. He will be no contemner, not even of those rites and ordinances
 20 enjoined by law, as necessary to imprint and retain a sense of religion in the minds of men. He will extend his care to the outworks, as knowing that when these are gone, it may be difficult to preserve the rest.

Notwithstanding the vain assertion of those men who would justify the present by saying 'all times are alike,' it is most evident that the magistrates, the laws, the very constitution of these realms have lost no small share of their authority and reverence since this great growth and spreading of impious principles. Whatever be the cause, the effect is apparent. Whether we
 30 ascribe it to the natural course of things, or to a just judgment upon those who, having been careless to preserve a due sense of the divine authority, have seen and shall see their own despised.

Darius, a heathen prince, made a decree that in every dominion of his kingdom men should tremble and fear before God (Dan., vi.26). Nebuchadnezzar, likewise, another heathen, made a decree that every people, nation and language which spoke anything amiss against God should be cut in pieces, and their houses

¹ To make the cause of such men the cause of liberty or toleration would be monstrous. A man is not suffered publicly to blaspheme, therefore he may not think freely; a profane miscreant is not indulged in the public worship of the devil, therefore a conscientious person may not serve God his own way! Is not this absurd? [Not in A—Ed.]

made a dunghill (Dan., iii.29). And if these things were done in Persia and Babylon, surely it may be expected that impious blasphemers against God and His worship should at least be discouraged and put out of countenance in these Christian countries. Now, a constant course of disfavour from men in authority would prove a most effectual check to all such miscreants. When, therefore, they are public and bold in their blasphemies, this is no small reflexion on those who might check them if they would.

It is not so much the execution of the laws as the countenance ¹⁰ of those in authority that is wanting to the maintenance of religion. If men of rank and power, who have a share in distributing justice, and a voice in the public councils, shall be observed to neglect divine worship themselves, it must needs be a great temptation for others to do the same. But if they and their families should set a good example, it may be presumed that men of less figure would be disposed to follow it. Fashions are always observed to descend, and people are generally fond of being in the fashion; whence one would be apt to suspect the prevailing contempt of God's word, and estrangement from His ²⁰ house, to a degree that was never known in any Christian country, must take its rise from the irreligion and bad example of those who are styled 'the better sort.'

Offences must come, but woe be to him by whom the offence cometh. A man who is entrusted with power and influence in his country hath much to answer for, if religion and virtue suffer through want of his authority and countenance. But in case he should, by the vanity of his discourse, his favour to wicked men, or his own apparent neglect of all religious duties, countenance what he ought to condemn, and authorize by his own ³⁰ example what he ought to punish; such a one, whatever he may pretend, is in fact a bad patriot, a bad citizen, and a bad subject, as well as a bad Christian.

Our prospect is very terrible, and the symptoms grow stronger every day. The morals of a people are in this like their fortunes; when they feel a national shock, the worst doth not shew itself immediately. Things make a shift to subsist for a time on the credit of old notions and dying opinions. But the youth born and brought up in wicked times, without any bias to good from early principle or instilled opinion, when they grow ripe must be ⁴⁰ monsters indeed. And it is to be feared, that age of monsters is not far off.

Whence this impiety springs, by what means it gains ground among us, and how it may be remedied, are matters that deserve the attention of all those who have the power and the will to serve their country. And although many things look like a prelude to general ruin; although it is much to be apprehended we shall be worse before we are better; yet who knows what may ensue, if all persons in power, from the supreme executor of the law down to a petty constable, would, in their several stations, behave themselves like men truly conscious and mindful that
 10 the authority they are clothed with is but a ray derived from the supreme authority of heaven? This may not a little contribute to stem that torrent which, from small beginnings, and under specious pretences, hath grown to such a head, and daily gathers force more and more to that degree, as threatens a general inundation and destruction of these realms.

l 3 the power and the will—(A) power and will. l 5 general—(A, B, C) some general.
l 10 ray derived—(A, B, C) derivative ray.